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THE ROMAN SATURA

ITS ORIGINAL FORM

IN CONNECTION WITH ITS LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

BY

H. NETTLESHIP, M.A.

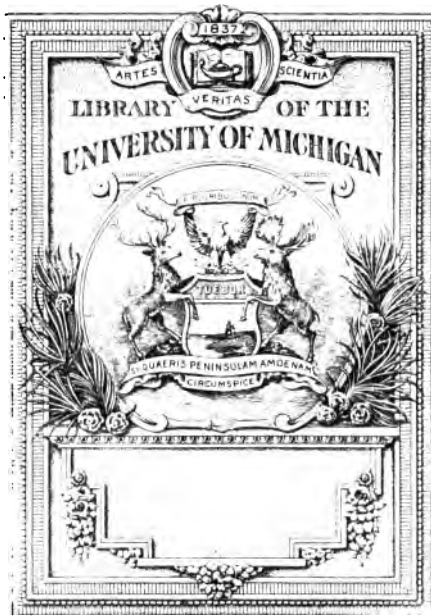
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THE ORIGINAL FORM OF
THE ROMAN SATURA.

THE name *satura*, which has given so much trouble to scholars, should to all appearance be compared with feminines formed from adjectives, such as *noxia*, a fault, *dira*, a curse, and others of the same kind. The meaning seems to be a *medley*. Varro quoted by Diomedes (3. p. 486, Keil) says, 'Satura est uva passa et polenta et nuclei pini ex mulso consparsa:' and Fest. p. 314, 'Satura et cibi genus ex variis rebus conditum est et lex multis aliis legibus confecta. Itaque in sanctione legum adscribitur "neve per saturam abrogato aut derogato."' How the word first came to be applied to a form of literature is not ascertainable. It may be that its use in this connection was metaphorical; it may be that *satura* (i. e. *satura fabula*) was from the first the term for a dramatic performance or a story which was a medley of scenes or incidents. When Juvenal speaks of 'nostri farrago libelli' he is doubtless alluding to the then accepted explanation of *satura* as an *olla podrida* or dish of various ingredients; but it must be remembered that all our Latin authorities on this matter speak at a time when the word has become fixed in its literary sense of a medley of metres, or of prose and verse. It is probable, however, that the word *satura* was familiar to the Romans long before the existence of the literary composition so named, and before those who used it had many metres to mingle. The Roman scholars who treat of the name were partly too familiar with it, partly too careless in their etymological researches, to give its real origin a thorough examination.

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An attempt will be made in the following pages to define somewhat more precisely than has hitherto been done what was the original form of the *saturna*, and to trace the course of that development which, under the pressure of various circumstances, brought it to the shape which it assumed in the hands of Juvenal, and in which it is most familiar to us.

Livy 7. 2. 4, in describing the origin of dramatic performances at Rome, says, 'Sine carmine ullo, sine imitandorum carminum actu ludiones ex Etruria acciti, ad tibicinis modos saltantes, haud indecoros motus more Tusco dabant. Imitari deinde eos iuventus simul inconditis inter se versibus coepere: nec absoni a voce motus erant. Accepta itaque res saepiusque usurpando excitata. Vernaculis artificibus, quia *ister* Tusco verbo ludio vocabatur, nomen histrionibus inditum, qui non, sicut ante, Fescennino versu similem incompositum temere ac rudem alternis iaciebant, sed inpletas modis saturnas descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu motuque congruenti peragebant. Livius post aliquot annos, qui ab saturnis ausus est primus argumento fabulam serere,' &c.

The passage is confused and difficult: but it seems fair to infer from it that Livy meant by the word *saturna* a simple scene without a plot, acted at first without, but afterwards (under Etruscan influence) with, a regular musical accompaniment and corresponding gestures. Livy contrasts *saturnae modis inpletae* or *saturnae* regularly finished with a musical setting to the irregular dialogue in verse, resembling the Fescennine, which existed before. Of the words *saturnae modis inpletae*, the most important are apparently *modis inpletae*. There is nothing to prevent us from supposing that Livy would have applied the word *saturna* to the previously existing irregular dialogue. A musical and rhythmical setting was first given to this dialogue on the introduction of the Etruscan art.

It follows with more certainty from the words of Livy that the performance to which he gives the name of *saturna* never developed into a play with a regular plot. Livius Andronicus, he says, was the first artist who gave up *saturnae*, and under Greek influence introduced a regular play—*argumento fabulam serere ausus est*. In other words, the Greek play, with its various scenes united by the thread of a single story, drove the *saturna* from the stage.

The fair inference from the whole passage seems to be twofold. First, that a *satura* differed from a play mainly in having no plot. Secondly, that the *satura* had in it an element of dialogue. This fact seems to follow by implication both from Livy's positive statements about the *satura* and from his omitting to mention the dialogue of Livius' plays as in any way a new factor in the development of the theatrical art. The new element is not the dialogue, but the plot.

To this view it may be objected that there is no proof of the rude performance which Livy calls *satura* standing in any real relation to the *satura* of literature, claimed by Horace¹ and Quintilian as an unquestionably Italian production. If however it can be shewn, as I think it can, that the *satura* of literature bears features of strong resemblance to the *satura* mentioned by Livy, much will be done towards removing this objection. And, before going further, we may observe that Livy evidently uses the word *satura* as implying a form of art perfectly well known to his readers, and not in any way needing to be distinguished from the literary *satura* with which of course they were perfectly familiar.

Let us assume then that the *satura* existed in old times in Italy as a rude form of dramatic art similar to, though not identical with, the Fescennine verses. When we are enabled to take up the thread of its continuous history we find it driven from the stage and become a form of literature proper. We have no record of the process by which the stage was gradually occupied by the *Atellana*, the *mimus*, and the *exodium*: but there seems to be no doubt that by the time of Ennius² the *satura* had come to be cultivated exclusively as a branch of literature, a literary luxury, it may almost be said, capable of a tone somewhat more serious than would have been suited for the stage and the general public. The *satura* of Ennius was, in form, a mixture or medley of metrical pieces in which the element of dialogue was in all probability present. Little enough remains

¹ 'Graecis intacti carminis,' Quintil. 10. 1. 93: 'Satura quidem tota nostra est.'

² Horace's words (S. 1. 10. 66), 'quam rudis et Graecis intacti carminis auctor,' imply that in his opinion Ennius was the first writer who attempted the literary *satura*.

of Ennius' productions in this line; but we may be sure that, like all his other works, his *saturae* were strongly tinged by Greek influence. It is difficult to suppose that the dialogue or contest between Life and Death mentioned by Quintilian (9. 2. 36) in the same breath with the fable of Prodicus about Virtue and Vice was not a copy of some Greek model; perhaps we may note here a touch of the popular Greek philosophy or reflection which, as we shall see, is so obvious in the later *satura*. Another interesting notice of the *satura* of Ennius is preserved by Gellius (2. 29), who tells us that Ennius worked the fable of the tufted lark and its young ones, with great skill and grace, into a *satura*. This may remind us of the way in which Horace uses the fable of the town and country mouse, and again suggests a trace of connection with Greek literature. For Ennius, in versifying a fable of Aesop, may possibly have translated some Greek metrical version of the story, such as Socrates is said to have amused himself with making in the long hours of his imprisonment.

The writings of Pacuvius in this department being entirely lost, it is necessary to pass on to the great change in the form and character of the *satura* introduced by Lucilius. In his hands the *satura* did not lose its character as a brief narrative or picture of life with an element of dialogue. So much is clear if only from the remains of the third book, from which Horace copied the Journey from Rome to Brundisium; from the scene in the fourth book between Aeserninus and Pacideianus; the rustic supper in the fifth book, and the convivial scenes of the fourteenth and twentieth. The dialogue of Lucilius seems partly to have assumed the form of an address to a friend or enemy (as in books 3, 5, 26, 30); partly to have been carried on between the characters in the *satura* itself (as in the twenty-eighth book); partly to have taken the more formal shape (of which Juvenal is so fond) of an address by the poet to his readers. Like the *satura* of Ennius, too, that of Lucilius had its points of contact with Greek philosophy¹, whether sceptical or reflective: witness

¹ Lactantius 6. 14. 3: 'Lucilii, apud quem disserens Neptunus de re difficillima ostendit non posse id explicari, "nec si Carneaden ipsum Orcu' remittat.'" Compare also 26. fragm. 59, 'lutrarum' (so Müller) 'exactorem Albanum et fulguritorem arborum' (of Jupiter): 27. 35, 'nescis, ubi Graeci, ubi nunc Socratici

the beginning of the first book and the mention of Lucilius' contemporary Carneades. These are points of resemblance between the *satura* of Lucilius and that of Ennius; but they are unimportant, and have been to a great extent forgotten, in comparison with the points of difference. Lucilius was the first writer who impressed on the *satura* that character of invective which it to a great extent preserved in the hands of Horace, Persius, Juvenal, and others (e. g. Albius¹), and which apparently in the view of a large section of the Roman literary public became essential to it. Personal the *satura* always is, it is always serious: but in the hands of Lucilius and those who imitated him it underwent a new Greek influence, that of the old Attic comedy, and became the instrument not only of personal reflection or advice or expostulation, but of personal attack. The movement is significant of a change in the spirit of the satirist and in that of his age. It was not only that the *satura* of Ennius may have seemed to Lucilius² cumbrous, grotesque, wanting in dignity; it may also have appeared at once too general and too cold in its contents to suit the concluding years of the seventh century of the city. Ennius wrote at a time when the Romans, after their newly won triumph over Carthage, could content themselves with merely enjoying and reproducing the literature of Greece, and applying its forms to the decoration of their own achievements. Before the time of the Gracchi there is little trace in Roman literature of the deep feeling of corruption in the governing classes which meets us from the time of Lucilius to the end of the republic. But in the hands of Lucilius the *satura* becomes the scourge of

charti?' 28. 1 (as restored by Munro),

'Hoc cum feceris,

Cum ceteris reus una tradetur Lupo.

(A) Non aderit. (B) ἀρχαῖς hominem et στοιχειούς simul

Privabit. (A) Igni cum et aqua interdixerit,

Duo habet στοιχεῖα; adfuerit. (B) Posterioribus

στοιχειούς, si id maluerit, privabit tamen.'

The line 26. 71, 'sin autem hoc vident, bona semper petere sapientem putant.' has the ring of the schools: so Inc. 101, 'nondum etiam, qui haec omnia habebit, Formosus, dives, liber, rex solus feretur?' (The references are to Müller's edition.)

¹ 'Cuius Luciliano caractere sunt libelli' (Varro, L. L. 3. 2. 17): see Teuffel, Gesch. d. Röm. Litt. § 189, 1.

² 'Non ridet versus Enni gravitate minores?'

incapacity in high places; he is the chronicler of the real Rome of his time, painting with all sincerity like a shipwrecked sailor on his votive board (as Horace says) the picture of his own life and that of his countrymen. The Rome¹ of Lucilius is a city in which the pleasures of money-getting and the banquet and the brothel are drawing away men's minds from honest living and public spirit and that manly virtue, which, teaching the due limits of desire and the real value of material prosperity, bids men put their country first, their parents second, and their friends last. All men have but one profession—to deceive, to flatter, to pretend, every man's hand against every man, and reputation depending upon wealth and love of display. Turning to political life², Lucilius sees the *nobiles* sinning unpunished and beating off all attacks by their mere nobility. In war³ Roman armies are defeated through the sheer ignorance of their commanders—a Mancinus, a Manilius, a Popilius Laenas. Roman

- ¹ 1. 16: 'Infamem vitam turpemque odisse popinam.'
 4. 3: 'O Publi, O gorges, Galloni: es homo miser, inquit;
 Cenasti in vita nunquam bene, cum omnia in ista
 Consumis squilla atque acupensere cum in decumano.'
 Ib. 5: 'Occidunt, Lupe, saperdae te et iura siluri.
 6: Quod sumptum atque epulas victu praeponis honesto.'
 5. 29: 'Vivite lurcones, comedones, vivite ventres.'
 Ib. 33: 'Nam si quod satis est homini id satis esse potesset,
 Hoc sat erat: nunc cum hoc non est, qui credimu' porro
 Divitias ulla animum mi explere potesse?'
 6. 3: 'Nequitia occupat hos, petulantia prodigitasque.'
 30. 24: 'Quem sumptum facis in lustris, circum oppida lustrans!'
 Inc. 4: 'Nunc vero a mane ad noctem, festo atque profesto,
 Toto itidem pariterque die populusque patresque
 Lactare indu foro se omnes, decedere nusquam:
 Uni se atque eidem studio omnes dedere et arti:
 Verba dare ut caute possint, pugnare dolose;
 Blanditia certare, bonum simulare virum se;
 Insidias facere, ut si hostes sint omnibus omnes.'
 Ib. 5: 'Aurum atque ambitio specimen virtutis virique est:
 Quantum habeas, tantum ipse sies tantique habearis.'
² 6. 2: 'Peccare inpune rati sunt
 Posse; et nobilitate facul propellere iniquos.'
 Compare the series of personal attacks, 11. 10, 11, 12, 13.
 11. 4: 'Praetor noster ad hoc quam spurcus sit ore,' etc.
 14. 15: 'Publiu' Pavu' Tuditanus mihi quaestor Hibera
 In terra fuit: lucifugus, nebulo, id genus sane.'
³ 1. 30: 'Et mercede merent legiones . . .
Munu' tamen fungi et muros servare potissint.'

soldiers serve a whole life-time in Spain; Viriathus, a barbarian Hannibal, conquers them in war. In the dumb sense of a coming change the *satura* becomes more personal, and grapples more closely than before with life and public affairs. The practical and political stamp which almost all Roman writing bore from the time of the Gracchi to that of Augustus is now for the first time clearly manifest.

Estimating the literary value of what remains to us of the satire of Lucilius, Munro says¹, 'As for the author himself, I must confess that a continuous perusal of his remains has ended in much disappointment. True it is that most of the fragments are quite insignificant, single lines or pieces of lines, quoted to illustrate some unusual word. But my disappointment extends equally to the longer and more ambitious pieces, such for instance as that on Virtue preserved to us by Lactantius; the ideas are commonplace, the language often unpoetical, the rhythm loose and disjointed; there is not the slightest trace of the graceful touch of Horace or the powerful pathos of Juvenal. In style generally how infinitely does he fall below the consummate elegance and finish of Terence, who was before him too in time! Then what a disgusting fondness he displays for coarseness and obscenity, descending often to downright bestiality! How Quintilian can speak of him as he does, adding that some even then placed him at the head of all Latin poets, is to me incomprehensible; I should say even Horace's estimate of him was too high, raised designedly not to excite the ill-will of his contemporaries: for

2. 11: 'Hostilius contra
Pestem permittemque catax quam et Maniu' nobis.'
13. 2: 'Aut forte omnino ac fortuna vincere bello.
Si forte ac temere omnino, quid rursum ad honorem?'
15. 12: 'dum miles Hibera
Terra seice [so Müller] meret ter sex, aetate quasi, annis.'
26. 45: 'At Romanus populus victus vi superatus proelii
Saepest multis, bello vero punquam, quo sunt omnia.'
- Ib. 46: 'Contra flagitium nescire, bello vinci a barbaro
Viriato Hannibale' [so rightly Munro, following the MSS].
- Ib. 47: 'Percrepa pugnam Popili, facta Corneli cane.'

¹ Journal of Philology, vol. vii. no. 14. With regard to the age of Lucilius, Lucian Müller argues with much plausibility that the date of his birth commonly accepted from Jerome is some thirty years too late.

Lucilius, as Cicero will attest, unquestionably had a brilliant reputation.'

This criticism can hardly be called too severe, considering the character of our remaining fragments: yet it is possible perhaps even from them to divine why Lucilius was so popular. Fastidious¹ and sensitive as to his own reputation (possibly the more so from bad health), Lucilius was clearly conscious of having something new and true to tell his countrymen. He felt that he had the originality of nature which justified his following a path different from that of the general public. He cannot², he says, be persuaded to change his ways for those of the common Romans of his day; though a Roman *eques*, he will not become a *publicanus*; the tithes do not suit him; being, as he is, Lucilius, he will not be another. The world he sees around him is a world of avarice and pleasure-seeking and ambition; but he is a true man who loves his friend, a true poet who loves the Muses³; his papers are his friends to whom he commits all his secrets⁴; his verse, like himself, shall be sincere and simple⁵, not full of the artificial bombast of the tragedians⁶, but the poetry of real life, which though deserving the praise of the wise shall yet not speak

¹ 1. 2: 'Quis leget haec?'

26. 5: 'Evadat saltem aliquid aliquis quod conatus sum.'

14. 5, 6: 'Non paucis malle a sapientibus esse probatum
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκέσσει καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν?'

5. 2: 'Si tam corpus loco validum ac regione mearet
Scriptoris quam vera meat sententia cordi.'

² 26. 13: 'Mihi quidem non persuadetur publicis mutem meos.'

Ib. 14: 'Publicanus vero ut Asiae fiam scripturarius

Pro Lucilio, id ego nolo, et uno hoc non muto omnia.'

Ib. 15: 'Demique adeo male me accipiunt decumae et provenienti male.'

Ib. 24: 'Ego si qui sum et quo folliculo nunc sum indutus non queo.'

³ 30. 2: 'Quantum haurire animus Musarum ec fontibu' gestit.'

27. 10: 'Animum quaerunt amici, rem parasiti ac ditias.'

⁴ Hor. S. 2. 1. 30:

'Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris, neque si male cesserat umquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene.'

⁵ 26: 'Ecfero versum. Ego quem ec praecordiis
Populum aucupamur istis cum scriptoribus.
Volumus capere animum illorum.'

⁶ 4. 20: 'Tityi e pulmonibus atque adipe unguen
Excoctum attulit Eumenidum sanctissima Erinys.'

exclusively to the learned, but go straight to the heart of the intelligent classes of Rome and Italy. It is the aspirations and discontents of these classes that Lucilius feels and expresses. He does not write up to the taste of the select few¹, or down to that of the rabble, but aims at hitting the mean of cultivated good sense. If in the hands of Ennius the *satura* had worn the first stiffness of the artificial drama, here at length was a poet who could clothe the dry bones with life, and make the national literature speak with a new voice. Lucilius is the child of his time, who yet calls on his countrymen to return to the traditions of a better age; in this sense as well as in his freedom of speech a sort of parallel to Aristophanes. There is something in his remains, despite their crudity and want of form, of the ring of Gaius Gracchus. Thus it happened that in his life-time he outstripped his predecessors in popularity², and remained for long after the favourite of readers who preferred free utterance and genuine republican feeling to ideality and classical form. Those who preferred Lucilius to Horace are mentioned by Tacitus³ in the same breath with those who preferred Lucretius to Vergil.

The great reputation of Lucilius has made it necessary to examine his claims to it at greater length than the limits of the subject would strictly justify. Fortune has probably been unjust to him, nor is it easy to find in his fragments that refinement of form (if this be the meaning of *gracilitas*, Gellius 6. 14) which the ancients praised. But whatever may have been his real excellencies, it is clear that in altering the character and compass of the *satura* he also narrowed it. Not only did he confine his metre for the most part to the hexameter, thereby limiting the freedom of form which was a main characteristic of the old *satura*, but he did much to make invective an integral

¹ 'Persium non curo legere, Iulium Congum volo.' See Cic. Fin. 1, § 8: 'Nec vero, ut noster Lucilius, recusabo quominus omnes mea legant. Utinam esset ille Persius! Scipio vero et Rutilius multo etiam magis; quorum ille iudicium reformidans, Tarentinis ait se et Consentinis et Siculis scribera. Facete is quidem, sicut alias; sed neque tam docti tunc erant, ad quorum iudicium elaboraret, et sunt illius scripta leviora, ut urbanitas summa appareat, doctrina mediocris.'

² 30. 3, 4: 'Et sua perciperet retro relicta iacere

Et sola in multis nunc nostra poemata ferri.'

³ Dialogus 23.

part of its contents. If we read between the lines of Horace's criticism of Lucilius¹ we shall see, I think, that Horace takes exception quite as strongly to his limitation of the field of the *satura* as to the slovenly character of his versification. Taking very much the tone of Aristotle², when, in his remarks on the origin of comedy, he says that in the *Margites* Homer indicated the lines on which comedy should be composed, *οὐ ψόγον, ἀλλὰ τὸ γελοῖον δραματοποιήσας*, Horace complains that Lucilius is entirely the child of the old comedy; *hinc omnis pendet*: his inspiration is drawn from that of Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes, the metre alone is changed. But if Hermogenes and the singers of Catullus had read these comedians, they would have seen that the strength of the old comedy lay in its mastery of wit and ridicule, not in vehemence, still less in slovenliness and uniformity. The satirist's true virtue is not to be monotonous or cumbrous, but versatile, now grave, now gay, now appearing as the orator or the poet, now as the man of the world, with all his strength in reserve. A true picture of the *satura* as it should have been; for Horace was too fastidious to think that any one (certainly not Lucilius) had attained to this ideal. It is as if Horace had said, 'Lucilius depends entirely on the old comedy, and yet all of it that he has really seized is the force of its invective. He has not caught the ring of its laughter, its wit, its play of feature and emotion: only if the Roman *satura* can do this will it be worthy of being named by the side of its model.'

In what sense the attempts of Varro of Atax³, and the other writers whom Horace leaves unnamed, served to form a transition from Lucilius to Horace we cannot say. It is somewhat strange that, deeply as Horace evidently felt the shortcomings of Lucilius, he never disputes with him on the subject of metre, but apparently accepts the hexameter as the normal measure of the *satura*. Perhaps from this prejudice, perhaps from the absence in it of all pretensions to poetry, he never mentions the Menippean satires of

¹ S. I. 4, l. 10.

² Poet. 4.

³ Hor. S. I. 10. 46 foll.:

'Hoc erat, experto frustra Varrone Atacino
Atque quibusdam aliis melius quod scribere possem,
Inventore minor.'

Terentius Varro; which, had they survived, would probably (to judge by the remaining fragments) have been a more precious relic than the long invectives of Lucilius. It is unnecessary to enter here into the details of Varro's charming pictures of contemporary life in Rome, or of the various points of social, moral, religious, philosophical, or literary interest¹, on which they touched; all that need here be pointed out is the *satura* of Varro was, as Quintilian remarks², the old and genuine *satura*. It was a medley, not of different metres only, but of prose and verse. Its spirit is also that of the true *satura*. The speaker does not preach at or abuse, but describes and reflects upon the life of his contemporaries, and that with a mellow and genial wisdom. Like the fool in the tragedy, he stands at the centre of things, professing to see through imposture, to read things as they are, to expose the vanity of human wishes and the weakness or hypocrisy of human pretensions: above all things he is a plain speaker who will tell the world the truth to its face. In this spirit the Roman satirist and the cynic philosopher are very much at one. Varro is made by Cicero to say that he did not translate but imitated Menippus; which probably means that he adopted the form of the *satura* as the best embodiment of the ideas of Menippus³.

Varro's was essentially a quiet genius, and it is partly, perhaps, due to this fact that in spite of the genuinely Roman flavour which they shared with all that he wrote, the Menippean satires never won their way into general popularity, or enabled the old-fashioned medley of metres, or of prose and verse, to reassert itself as the recognised form of the *satura*. Again, if we may

¹ *Aborigines* (περὶ ἀνθρώπων φύσεως), *Ἄμμον μετρεῖς* (περὶ φιλαργυρίας), *ἀνθρωπόπολις* (περὶ γενεθλιακῆς), *Bimarcus* (a dialogue between Varro, his second self, and Manius), *Caprinum Proelium* (περὶ ἡδονῆς), *Cygnus* (περὶ ταφῆς), *Devicti* (περὶ φιλονεικίας), *Ἐκατόμβη* (περὶ θυσίων), *Endymionus* (on dreaming), *Eumenides* (a philosophical dinner), *Ἐχω σε* (περὶ τύχης), *Gloria* (περὶ φθόνου), &c.

² 10. 1. 93: 'Alterum illud etiam prius saturae genus, sed non sola carminum varietate mixtum condidit Terentius Varro . . . Plurimos hic libros et doctissimos composuit.' The text of this passage has been much discussed, but the general sense is pretty plain. It seems possible that *prius* may be a mere gloss explaining *illud*.

³ Cic. Acad. Post. 1, § 8: 'Menippum imitati, non interpretati.' It is interesting to compare the tone of the Roman *satura* with that of the echoes of Menippus preserved by Lucian.

trust Cicero¹ and the fragments of the Menippean satires themselves, it is evident that Varro adopted a graver, more cultured, more philosophical, and less personal tone than Lucilius. He cares more for the sketch than for his own signature at the foot of it, and appeals to a public that can read between the lines. Possibly also the cumbrousness which is never absent from the graver works of Varro may have haunted him here also, and prevented his satires from being read outside of a small circle of students.

The satire of Horace was evidently, both in matter and in form, intended as a protest against that of Lucilius. Horace indeed retains the hexameter; but in spite of its apparent freedom, his versification is always, within the limits which he has laid down for himself, finished and perfect; it is not the writing of a man who dashes off his two hundred verses in the hour. It is more important to observe that the satire of Horace lacks, to a great extent, the element of invective. It is true that there is much talk about himself and his detractors, but this is always, professedly at least, in self-defence: *hic stilus haud petet ultro Quemquam animantem*². He follows Lucilius, he says, but with this exception. And it appears on examination that, putting aside the uniformity of its metre, the *satira* or *sermo* of Horace is very much the old-fashioned medley. He addresses the public on its own life, sometimes directly, sometimes in the form of a scene or a dialogue. It may be observed that the form of dialogue is preserved chiefly in his second book, where we find it in the second, third, fourth, fifth, and seventh satires. In the first book the fifth, seventh, eighth, and ninth are true *satirae*; the first, second, and third are ethical discourses; the fourth, sixth, and tenth pieces of self-justification, personal or literary. In the second book Horace appears to have worked himself more thoroughly than in the first into the form and manner of the *satira*; there is nothing there which is not either a scene or a conversation; there is no mere direct moral address to the people, but each piece, like a philosophical dialogue, has a setting of its own.

It seems at first sight strange that Horace, whose genius was

¹ Cic. l. c.: 'Multa admixta ex intima philosophia, multa dicta dialectice.'

² S. 2. 1. 39.

so admirably adapted for the kind of writing which the *satira* best represented, should so soon have given up the form of the *satira* for that of the epistle. I would suggest, that having deliberately abandoned the old-fashioned medley of prose and verse as an anachronism, and having elected to follow Lucilius in uniformity of metre and in the choice of the hexameter, he found that the dialogue, an essential element in the true *satira*, could not be carried on with success in this measure. The form of the epistle, supposed to be addressed to one person, and not necessarily involving dialogue or dramatization, was better fitted for the kind of discourse which Horace loves to pour out than that of the *satira*, which was supposed to be addressed to the general public and involved more or less of dramatic form. That Horace was a true prophet is clearly shewn by the failure of Persius, who in his devotion to Horace has chosen to imitate the dialogue of the second book of the satires, and succeeded in producing a form of writing which for crudeness and obscurity can hardly be exceeded, and which goes far to make the reader forget his real power.

The older form of *satira*, the mixture of metre with metre and prose with verse, had a brilliant revival in the hands of Petronius, the power, pathos, and wit of whose pictures have not only rescued from discredit and oblivion a form of literature of which we should otherwise have remained nearly ignorant, but have given the world an unique idea of the capacity of the ancient Italian genius. Nothing is a greater proof of the genius of Petronius than the entire freedom of his style from the mannerisms of his age. While literature in general was growing more and more corrupted by the artificial tinge with which the schools of the rhetoricians were colouring it, Petronius writes with perfect purity and dramatic propriety; his characters standing out and speaking to us with all the vividness of real life, while the writer himself remains in the background and lets the play tell its own story. Who can forget Giton or Trimalchio or Eumolpus? How different this from the stiff personifications of Persius; how far removed from the hexameter *satira* as it reached its full development in the hands of Juvenal, under whose treatment versification and contents alike are cramped and confined. Even the hexameter of Juvenal is not the free

measure of Horace, but the formal epic verse as stereotyped by Vergil, and handled without any of Vergil's various power. The language of Juvenal, again, is an artificial dialect which no one, outside of a lecture-room, could ever have spoken; his style is full of inversion, *innuendo*, and unnatural periphrasis. Powerful as he undoubtedly is, he knows little of the spirit of poetry; much of his passion is forced and his invective unreal; his scenes are cumbrously put together, his character-drawing lacks life and delicacy. Petronius is indeed obscene beyond all possibility of excuse; but it may be questioned whether Juvenal, who has none of the sweetness and versatility and reserve of Petronius, and whose coarseness is the dull rhetorical coarseness of a serious mind, can after all claim much superiority on this score¹. All Juvenal's pictures are drawn with the same monotonous power and in the same lurid colours. In the hands of the professed rhetorician the *satira* has lost almost all its kindness, and speaks the language of moral indignation in the tone of an angry literary clique. As far as his form is concerned, it may be observed that a shadow of the proper form of the *satira* is left in the third and ninth satires, which are cast in the form of a dialogue; but most of Juvenal's pieces are addressed to one person, and might more properly be called epistles.

× We have seen how, amid the surroundings of the empire, which contributed so powerfully to blight the freshness and sincerity of literature, the *satira* came in Juvenal's hands almost to lose its original character. We may now attempt to answer the question whether there is, after all, any characteristic common to all its forms which it preserves from the beginning to the end of our acquaintance with it. It may then be observed, first, that the *satira* always contains a strongly-marked personal element. The writer in his own person addresses the general

¹ A certain *quota* of obscenity was probably considered a proper and conventional attribute of the *satira*. It may have been taken over by the literary men, with other properties, from the primitive *satira*, which resembled the Fescennine verses, as Livy says, and that probably not in its form only. Certainly there is a strong element of coarseness in Lucilius, Varro, Horace, Juvenal, and Petronius; nor is Persius altogether spotless. I should be disposed to refer this fact not to the moral *obliquity* of these writers, but to the conventional traditions of their art.

public or an imaginary companion. Even the dull *satura* attributed to Sulpicia is supposed to be a dialogue between herself and the Muse. Or, again, the satirist describes a scene in which he himself takes a part. It follows that dialogue, either obvious or suggested, is an integral part of the true *satura*; the satirist talking to his readers or to himself or to one of the characters in the scene which he is describing. Secondly, the *satura* as we know it is a description of isolated scenes, but never contains a regular plot. This is a characteristic which is not wholly lost even in the writing of Juvenal.

Now these attributes, so clearly discernible in the literary *satura* as we possess it, tally entirely with those which we may infer from Livy to have belonged to the early *satura*. As we remarked at starting, Livy clearly distinguishes the *satura* from a play with a regular plot, and he gives to understand by implication that it was a dialogue. Quintilian, and after him Diomedes¹, distinguish two kinds of *satura*, the older sort represented by Ennius and Varro, the later by Lucilius and his followers. As far as the original and proper form of the *satura* is concerned, this division, if the foregoing remarks are just, would appear to be arbitrary. Another point deserves attention. Quintilian claims the *satura* as an entirely Roman or Italian production, and describes it as originally a medley of various metres, or even of prose and verse. Livy speaks of it as a form of art existing as far back as the time when the Etruscan *ludiones* were introduced. Suppose that the *satura* was originally a native Italian form of drama, consisting of a simple scene or narrative from common life represented by two actors or perhaps by one, reciting a mimic dialogue; suppose this humble representation gradually banished from the stage by more finished importations from abroad, and then transferred to paper by literary men (like plays which are not intended for acting) and perhaps recited by them, with a certain amount of action or dramatization, to small circles of friends; and it will not be difficult to account for all the forms which the *satura* assumed

¹ 3, p. 485, Keil: 'Satira dicitur carmen apud Romanos nunc quidem maledicum et ad carpenda hominum vitia archaëe comoediæ caractere compositum, quale scripserunt Lucilius et Horatius et Persius. Et olim carmen quod ex variis poematibus constabat satira vocabatur, quale scripserunt Pæcuvius et Ennius.'

in the hands of its various masters at different periods of Roman history. Its disappearance from the stage on the introduction of the Greek play is very analogous to the disappearance of the Saturnian metre on the introduction of the hexameter; and as the introduction of the hexameter put an end to all hope of the development of a native Italian poetry, so that of the Greek play may have destroyed the beginnings of a native Italian drama. As soon as the *satura* became literary, it could not but become, to a certain extent, artificial; and though it never wholly lost its scenic character, it naturally became more personal in the sense of including a justification of the writer's point of view¹, and thus came indirectly to be used as a channel for various kinds of political, literary, and even critical and grammatical *causeries*². But there is really nothing to shew that the *satura* was in any sense derived from a Greek source; when Horace says that Lucilius is dependent on the old comedy, this, as we have seen, implies no more than that Lucilius imported into satire the manner and spirit of moral and political invective.

If my hypothesis as to the original form of the *satura* be correct, its character and development must have corresponded very nearly with that of the Greek *μῆμος*. In his Prolegomena to Persius, Otto Jahn has examined the relations of the *μῆμος* and the *satura* at considerable length, and has laid some stress on the tradition preserved by Joannes Lydus, that Persius studied and imitated the *μῆμοι* of Sophron. But the statement of Joannes Lydus must stand or fall with another which he makes in the same sentence, and which is now generally given up, that the model of Lucilius was Rhinthon. It is very probable, of course, that the Roman satirists studied Sophron; but this does not prove that the *satura* was not, in its origin, a native Italian production; unless we prefer to conjecture that both the *μῆμος* and the *satura* represented a rude form of dramatic

¹ As in the case, especially, of Lucilius and Horace.

² See the fragments of Lucilius' ninth book. Dziatzko, in the *Rheinisches Museum*, vol. 31, part 1, suggests an analogy between the grammatical precepts of Lucilius and those of the *γραμματικὴ τραγῳδία* of Callias (Athenaeus 10, p. 453). It may be that the *γραμματικὴ τραγῳδία* suggested to Lucilius the grammatical *discussions* of his ninth book.

art existing before the separation of the Greek and Italian nations.

But that the *satira*, after it had become an artificial literary production, was largely tinged by Greek influences, is not to be denied for a moment. Among these influences that of the old Attic comedy has been much dwelt upon by critics from Horace downwards. It is probably an accident that in our remaining fragments of Lucilius no allusion is made to Eupolis, Cratinus, or Aristophanes. And although Lucilius Graecized the form of his *satirae* by writing them in Greek metres, there is little in his remains the spirit of which is not quite genuinely Italian. Perhaps the influence of the old comedy, though real, was general and intangible, acting in the way of inspiration and suggestion¹. For, as we have seen, there was much in the political circumstances of the time at which Lucilius lived to tempt the writer of *satira* out of the old ways into the line of personal attack. However the matter may really have stood, it yet seems certain that no Roman satirist who intended to follow in the line of Lucilius would neglect the study of the old comedy. When Horace says, or makes his friend say²,

‘Quorsum pertinuit stipare Platona Menandro,
Eupolin, Archilochum, comites educere tantos,’

he gives concisely a very clear notion of the sum of Greek influences which were recognized as bearing on the composition of the *satira*.

The mention of Plato by Horace (whether he means the philosopher or the comedian is uncertain) reminds us of the relation between the *satira* and the Greek popular philosophy. As Greek philosophy never wholly dispensed with the form of dialogue, philosophy and the drama were early brought into a curious literary alliance, which is well illustrated by the tradition that Plato used carefully to study the mimes of Sophron³. It is clear that the *satira* of Varro contained a great deal of

¹ Pers. 1. 123: ‘Audaci quicunque adflate Cratino
Iratum Eupoliden praegrandi cum sene palles.’

² S. 2. 3. 11.

³ Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, 2ter Theil, Erste Abtheilung, p. 344 (3rd edition).

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